

Introduction

Highway transportation system efficiency today more than ever plays a vital role in our economy and way of life. It is used every day by businesses, industry and the residential sector. It is the interface between all other modes of travel and is accepted as a necessary part of our suburban lifestyle. For this reason direct routing with minimum delay is an important consideration.

To ensure that an efficient system of streets is planned for, that individual projects fit into a master scheme and that a cohesive coordinated complementary system is achieved a thoroughfare plan is developed.

During the past thirteen years since the development of the original Lenoir-Hudson Thoroughfare Plan several new roads have been built. The Outer Loop, the most recent and most expensive of these projects is presently under consideration. To ensure that future construction is in line with recent growth trends, an updated thoroughfare plan as documented in this report was developed.

Existing and Projected Conditions

Lenoir and Hudson are located approximately seventy miles northwest of Charlotte and ninety miles northeast of Asheville in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains as shown in Figure 1. Major highways serving the area include US 321, NC 18 and NC 90. Rail service is provided by the Carolina and Northwest Railroad which generally follows Norwood Street and runs north and south through the area.

The dominant industry for the area is furniture manufacturing which accounts for over 50% of the industry for the area. This trend is expected to continue with the expansion of production at existing locations.

Population growth for the Lenoir-Hudson planning area has been steady as shown in Table 1 and Figure 2. Figures in the 1980 Census show a growth in township and county population and a slight decrease in population inside the city limits of Lenoir. Extension of these trends to 2005 yields a planning area growth of 45% or approximately 15,000 people.

Residential growth has occurred mostly to the northeast and south of Lenoir and the east of Hudson.